

7 Origins and Development of Snodland

Environments grow in response to local circumstances and it is therefore important to understand the principal influences which created the distinctive character areas of Snodland.

Snodland is a small town located on the River Medway between Rochester and Maidstone, with a population of approximately 12,000 people. The town is situated on the A228 connecting the Medway Towns with Tonbridge, and the M20 motorway junction 4 is 2 miles south of the town allowing good access to London and the Coast.

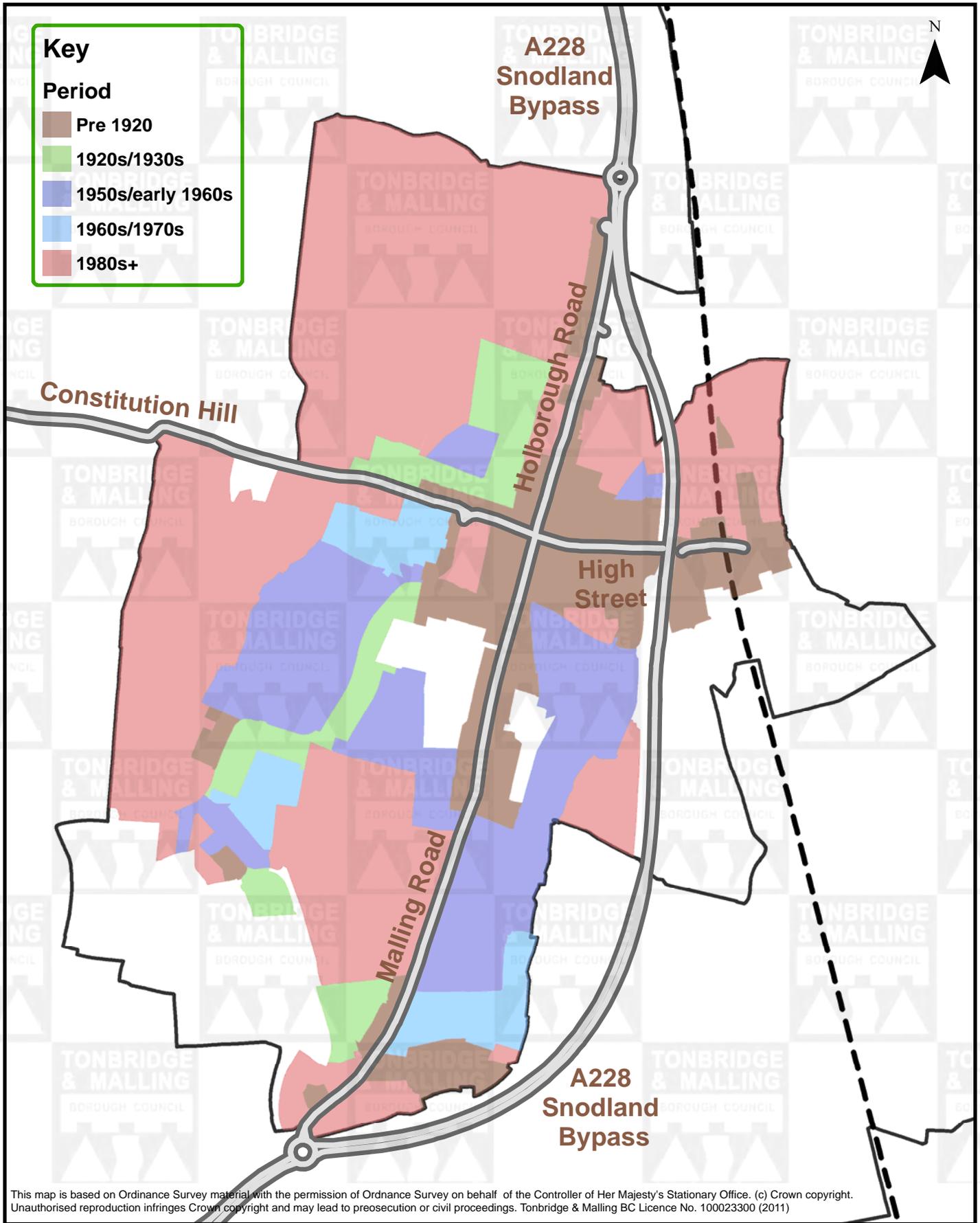
There is evidence that there has been a settlement at this location on the River Medway since Roman times. It was an important crossing point over the Medway for Pilgrims heading to Canterbury.

Predominantly an agricultural settlement, Snodland expanded dramatically during the 19th Century as building boomed. Chalk extraction and Lime working created a demand for housing as these industries grew within the local area creating accommodation needs for the workforce. In addition to this, the production of paper in the area increased significantly in the 1850s and Snodland's population doubled between 1840 and 1857. After the Medway Valley railway was opened in June 1856, the village trebled in size between 1861 and 1881.

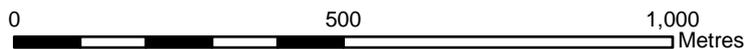
The development of Snodland has been constrained by the railway line, the river and the location of industrial works.

Little further growth occurred in the town until the 1960s when major "planned" growth took place around the edges of the town. This continued into the early 1990s when the strategic focus for house building shifted towards developing brownfield land rather than green field sites. This resulted in small scale in-fill developments within the built up confines of the town. In 2005, Berkeley Homes commenced development of the former quarry at Holborough for approximately 1,200 new homes which had been allocated for development in the local plan.

Snodland Conservation Area was designated and adopted in June 1993 and recently readopted in 2005. The Character Area Appraisal work did not look at the conservation area again, as this work has recently been carried out and there have not been any changes in or around the area to make such a review necessary. Instead, the focus of this work has been to look at the remaining areas of Snodland and to appraise their character.



Map 3: Evolution of Snodland
 Snodland Character Area Appraisal



8 Character Area Appraisals

Close analysis has been undertaken to identify the distinctive features that define the character of the different parts of Snodland using recognised methodologies and with public involvement. The next sections of the SPD describe the locally distinctive contextual features of each area as well as locally distinctive positive features and negative features that are worthy of enhancement.

Key characteristics of each Character Area are illustrated on a Townscape Analysis Map and are summarised in table form. Annotated photographs are also included to depict part of the character of the area.

Whilst the principal characteristics have been summarised, it has not been possible to illustrate each individual feature and consequently the absence of a feature from this document does not necessarily mean that it is unimportant to the character of the local area.

This appraisal looks only at the town of Snodland (not the Parish) and only within the defined confines of the urban area.

Map 2 identifies three Areas of Landscape Significance within the built up area, including Holborough Road Allotments and the Recreation Ground which do not form part of any individual Character Area but contribute to the character and setting of the areas that abut them.